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THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL

Continuing "The Elementary School Teacher"

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LECTURES ON THE WAR

We are glad to give space to the following letter from the Director of the Committee on Public Information at Washington, D. C.:

I wish to call your attention to the series of lectures illustrated with slides which is being prepared by George F. Zook, Professor of Modern European History, Pennsylvania State College, for Committee on Public Information. The lectures and slides have to do with the various war activities of the United States up to this time. The cantonments, airplanes, the Navy, ship-building, the trenches, and many other features of the war are described in an interesting and instructive way. Each lecture is accompanied by from forty-five to sixty-five slides which are being sold at the

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nominal price of fifteen cents each. The lectures and slides will be available for use about October 1. Superintendents and teachers should begin now to plan for these lectures. They will find them just what is needed to give their pupils an intelligent idea of what our government is doing to win the war.

For further information address the Division of Civic and Educational Publications, Committee on Public Information, Washington, D. C.

THE PRICE OF TEXTBOOKS

It happens that the evidences of the importance of the textbook problem multiply rapidly just at the time that our series of articles on this subject is opening. In the book reviews of this issue will be found a summary of Professor Hall-Quest's new book on the subject and a few days ago the Commissioner of Education held at Washington a conference of bookmen who had asked him for help in a matter of vital concern to them.

The problem discussed at the Washington conference can be set forth as follows: Many of the states have passed laws requiring all publishers who bid on school books in that state to fill their contracts at the lowest price which they give to any state. The periods of adoption for the different states do not coincide. Let us assume that a new adoption under such a law is due to be made in the state of Michigan at a time when an old contract is in force in Indiana. The price which the publishers can legally offer to Michigan is determined by the old contract price in Indiana. Later when Indiana comes to make a new adoption the Michigan contract will set the price. There is an unbroken circle thus holding the book companies to an early unchangeable price.

The book companies contend—and with justice—that there must be some method of adjustment at times like these when production is seriously involved in high costs of production. They are confronted, however, by the fact that there is in many quarters a tendency to be stringent with them because

of the widespread belief that their methods are wasteful and their profits large.

The conference at Washington calls attention to a problem of which, as indicated in the first paragraph of this note, we are likely to hear more in the future. The textbook is a factor of major importance in American schools. Its present methods of production and distribution are under public control in most states only through drastic restrictive legislation. We are going to be able to give our readers later a view of what is going on in California, where the state publishes books, and we shall have articles representing various other aspects of the matter. In the meantime it is a wholesome sign of growing national control of school matters that the bookmen seek the co-operation of the Commissioner of Education.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mr. Henry E. Brown supplied at the request of the editors of this *Journal* the following statement of what is going on at St. Paul through the efforts of the Commission of which he is secretary:

The War Camp Community Service of St. Paul has gone about the organization of the young women of St. Paul for active participation in war work. This organization was brought about, first, because of the prevalence in the community of several thousands of soldiers who had access to the Soldiers and Sailors' Club at Fourth and Cedar Streets. The Clubhouse used was the old Minnesota Club building of four stories, admirably suited for clubhouse purposes. There are four dance floors in the Club and dances and entertainments are given to the soldiers almost nightly. It was necessary to protect the soldiers and the people of St. Paul against improper use of the Club by women and girls and, therefore, the young women of the community were organized at first for the

purpose of making sure that at the social entertainments the proper restrictions were thrown around the soldiers, not only at the Soldiers and Sailors' Clubhouse, but in the entire community.

Gradually the organization grew from hundreds to thousands and it seemed necessary that some definite policy, with regard to keeping the women busy in war work and in preparation for their work after peace was declared, be developed. This proved to be a tremendous problem, especially with a hastily organized system, and appeal was made through the War Camp Community Service organizer, Mr. Henry E. Brown, formerly principal of the New Trier Township High School and secretary of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, who has entered the work on leave of absence from his school duties, to Mr. Wunderlich, Commissioner of Education, and Mr. S. O. Hartwell, Superintendent of Schools in the city of St. Paul, for use of the schools. They received the War Camp Community representative most cordially and, after being shown the objects of the organization, which is called the "Community Service League," under which the girls are organized for community service both national and local, the schools were thrown open to the use of these young ladies in any way that may seem desirable to the War Camp Community Service organizer.

Superintendent Hartwell and Commissioner Wunderlich stated that the public schools could be used by the War Camp Community Service Clubs as meeting places for the organization of their separate clubs; they could meet as individuals incorporated in the regular evening classes of the school or for special classes, as desired.

Previous to the conference with the school authorities, six hundred of the young ladies had been enrolled for work in conversational French, classes being held at the Church Club, the Public Library, and the St. Paul Institute. Teachers for

these classes have been secured, through the co-operation of patriotic citizens in St. Paul, and twenty lessons are given to the girls for \$1.00. The attendance at the French classes has been very unusual, almost 100 per cent., and of the thousands of young women organized in Community Service Clubs fully 90 per cent. are incorporated in the public night school system, taking courses in basketry, clay modeling, whittling, conversational French, military drill, gymnastics, etc.

Not only are the young women incorporated as students in the night schools, but the high school auditoriums have been thrown open for mass meetings and for organization purposes. A more hearty and instantaneous co-operation could not have been conceived.

Mrs. Anna Noble, of New York City, is the War Camp Community Service organizer for girls and has organized them into groups of twenty-five to fifty for club purposes. From three hundred to four hundred girls are incorporated into clubs weekly, at which time they are asked to pledge their loyalty and service to their nation and community. The organization of the girls has been confined largely up to this time to young girls and women about twenty years of age who are at work in offices as bookkeepers, stenographers, etc. The work will be extended, however, to include all women in industrial work. The only difficulty that has been experienced is to take care of the growing numbers, and without the co-operation of the public schools it would have been utterly impossible to take care of them and keep them busy.

The War Camp Community Service is designed for the purpose of stimulating actively the social forces of the community so that the community will function as a whole and the benefits of such an organization will be permanent. This has been accomplished in St. Paul in this department.

CHILD WELFARE IN WAR TIME

Several of the states are organizing to promote the child welfare movement. In Pennsylvania the State Committee of Public Safety, recognizing the unusual conditions which exist in many homes and communities, has arranged to put a director of child welfare into the field and to supplement the work of schools. In Kansas the Extension Division of the State University has issued an appeal to the women's clubs of the state to make child welfare a special subject of attention during the year. Three extracts from the circular issued in this campaign will make clear the grounds for the appeal and two of the practical lines of activity suggested:

A Disturbing Situation

As an indirect consequence of the great world war the children and young people of the nation are now threatened with delinquency, dependency, and other forms of ill conduct as never before during the present century. The club women of Kansas are hereby urged to suspend their purely social, recreational, and other light pastime activities and to devote the time thus saved to the pressing needs of the young. Indeed, every such woman should be considered as an associate member of the local Council of Defense and authorized to act at once with the Committee on Civilian Relief, and otherwise, in order to stem the receding tide of juvenile welfare.

The moral welfare of the young in European countries suffered an alarming setback during the first two or three years after their entrance into the war. We must act promptly and vigorously or the same serious condition will soon be upon us. Especially in the ways itemized below are the characters of our growing boys and girls being subjected to the most severe strain ever known to our time. The remarkable achievements of the national government in building up the health, the morals, and the spiritual integrity of the enlisted men stands out in sharp contrast to our failure to deal thus constructively with the boys and girls at home.

So every club woman of Kansas is asked to take this matter personally to heart, to inquire critically into the local situation, and to lend a hand wherever possible to the very trying task of taking adequate care of our juvenile population during the strain of the great war.

Co-operate with the School

A very large number of the ablest teachers, principals, and superintendents have been drawn away from the school and their places filled by those ill prepared to do the work. Both instruction and discipline are suffering and an alarming demoralization of the pupils is apparent in some places. You can assist as follows:

1. Have a subcommittee to visit the school and to co-operate with the work thereof, especially in matters of extending the school service into the community.
2. Seek to keep alive the school patrons' society, the parent-teacher association or any other form of club activity which will tend to bring patrons into close touch with the school and the other local agencies for juvenile guidance. An informal parenthood is one of our greatest welfare problems.
3. Appeal to the school authorities to supervise the play of the children at recess periods, to take over the direction of the boy scouts, the girl scouts, and other movements intended for boy and girl guidance.
4. Induce the school officials to provide weekly for the social entertainment of adolescents, both those within the school and those employed elsewhere, and to make this a regular part of the curriculum.
5. Many of the teachers seem to conduct the pupils' war service in the school without a definite plan. In some cases there has been much confusion and also much complaint of too close confinement. The committee of patrons should obtain from the Bureau of Education and the Treasury Department at Washington the government specifications for all this juvenile service, and then assist the schools to give it a balanced relation to the general class work.

Improve Street Morals

The street-and-alley morals of the young are likewise often very disturbing, to say the least. There is a cheap loafing center for juveniles in practically every community, where public morals are not actively guarded. The small towns and villages are conspicuous in this respect. Often there is a café, restaurant or other public place where there is conducted daily and nightly a sort of school of deviltry. Even country boys attend here in considerable numbers.

1. Make a quiet canvass of your community and secure a list of the places where boys loaf. Usually they will be found at dirty tobacco stores and cafés.

2. Exert pressure, both public and private, to have these closed to boys under eighteen, except as strictly business calls may demand. Publicity is a most helpful agency here.

3. In a back alley somewhere you will probably find a boy gang congregated evenings after school. They may come here partly to play ball and partly to participate in coarse conduct. A merchant on whose back lot such a crowd assembled daily came out with a big bag of popcorn and agreed with the boys that they were to have the lot free so long as they cut out cigarettes, swearing, and other tough conduct. Try this scheme in your town.

4. Seek to substitute clean, helpful street-and-alley conditions for the boys. They must have a large amount of leisure-time activity. Institute play centers at the Y. M. C. A. or on church lawns, in city parks, on school grounds and elsewhere. Request some one to volunteer as patron of each such place. A near-by resident can do it at cost of little time and no money.

NEW REASONING TESTS IN ARITHMETIC

The Bureau of Co-operative Research maintained by Indiana University has promoted much valuable investigation in the schools of Indiana. Through its publications it has reached out into a territory much wider than the state. The new director of this Bureau, Professor Walter S. Monroe, comes from the Emporia Normal School, where he conducted a successful research bureau for some years.

The first publication of the new director is a series of arithmetic tests. There are separate sheets for three different levels of pupils. The first is for the fourth and fifth grades, the second for the sixth and seventh, and the third for the eighth.

Professor Monroe is publishing through this *Journal* in a subsequent number a full account of these tests and of their use in several schools. No attempt will be made, therefore, at this point to do more than call attention to the tests, so that those who are interested may secure them.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The Association has taken a new step by appointing as field secretary President Waldo of the Normal School of

Kalamazoo, Michigan. He is to devote his time and attention to securing more support for schools. This is the kind of appointment which will inspire confidence.

President Swain, as chairman of the Committee on Salaries, Tenure and Pensions, made a vigorous report at the Pittsburgh meeting of the Association, calling for concerted action on the part of teachers in securing more funds for schools. Reports of this type furnish a sound foundation for growth.

In carrying out the campaign which the Association has undertaken this year under the leadership of Professor Strayer, there is urgent need of a larger membership in the Association. We are glad to give currency to the appeal for more members.

Teachers of this country have confidence in Professor Strayer, President Swain, and President Waldo. They will come to the support of the Association in large numbers if they can be assured that these are the men who will be in charge of their interests. There is no possibility of obscuring the fact that there are other elements in the organization of the Association in which teachers do not have confidence. Let the appointment be made of more such field secretaries who will carry the Association to the point which it should reach in numbers and influence.

"SCHOOL LIFE" PUBLISHED BY THE BUREAU OF EDUCATION

Some time ago the *Journal* noted the first issue of the periodical which is published by the United States Bureau of Education. The somewhat more definite notice now issued of the conditions on which it may be secured is as follows:

SCHOOL LIFE will be issued semi-monthly ten months every year. It will be sent gratuitously to school superintendents and certain other administrative officers of school systems and educational institutions. For others the subscription price is 50 cents per copy for 20 numbers, payable in advance. Subscriptions and remittances should be sent to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

P. P. CLAXTON, Commissioner

ILLITERACY AND THE TRAINING OF ILLITERATES

The experience of our army camps has brought a vivid realization to the public mind of the necessity of a campaign against illiteracy. Men who have passed through the ordinary community life of some of our better states turn out to be quite unable to read. The number of illiterates in the army is greatly increased by importations from the four ends of the earth and from our own negro population, but the fact remains that in many cases the failure to read is due to a lack of education in the case of a man native to our soil who has grown up under the shadow of a free school.

When the problem was seen it was attacked with characteristic American energy. Camp officers, recognizing that a fighting man is seriously handicapped by inability to read, in some cases made it a part of the military training of illiterates that they acquire the art of reading. Sometimes the Y. M. C. A. took up the matter. Then there arose the question who should teach reading and by what method. The Y. M. C. A. educational staff was used in many camps. In some places officers took the men in hand and in some cases teachers from neighboring school systems contributed volunteer service.

The painful fact became evident as the experiment went on that many of the teachers suddenly confronted by this new problem were utterly unable to grapple with it. They made the discovery, which teachers of little children made long ago, that method is an important part of teaching. In one case the superintendent of schools from a city near the cantonment, after visiting the classes for illiterates and noting their lack of success, induced some of his primary teachers to go and train the teachers of the men in methods.

At Camp Custer the Y. M. C. A. saw the necessity of well organized methods and issued a pamphlet entitled "A Book for Soldiers Who Have Not Had Educational Advantages in

English." The book was prepared by Nina J. Beglinger, who is in charge of the methods and material in army schools of the 340th Regiment Infantry.

The pamphlet is not unlike a primer in many of its externals. The simple sentences on the first page have a new content evidently drawn from camp life. "I can call you," "You can call me," are the introductory sentences. There are script letters as well as printed letters throughout the book. A carefully selected vocabulary is presented and there are samples of orders for sentinels, descriptions of patrolling, of military courtesy, and of like topics.

This practical way of attacking a practical problem sets an example for all future practice. If we are to clear up illiteracy, someone must work out in full the methods of doing the work. Enthusiasm is not enough, nor can all who are willing to teach illiterate adults do it well. The essential is a carefully devised system of procedure.

"PLAY SCHOOL" INSTEAD OF "KINDERGARTEN"

The following discussion is forwarded for publication by Dean Burris of the College of Education of the University of Cincinnati:

My objection to the name "Kindergarten" is not the result of a prejudice for all things German aroused by the war. I am, and long have been opposed to giving a German name to a well established part of our school system which is founded upon a principle which is utterly foreign to the German idea of education, broadly speaking. None of the principal nations now at war has shown as little welcome to the "kindergarten idea" as Germany.

Gymnasium is the name that best represents the German idea, and this is the name of the school which the Germans most prize and in which the foundations of her militarism have been laid. Discipline and obedience to command, not

self-activity manifesting itself through play, are the controlling principles in German education, and this is particularly true of its earlier stages.

Froebel himself found difficulty in finding a name for the school for young children as he thought it ought to be. The name which he gave to it seemed to be a happy inspiration and the world will always be glad that he did not adopt the name used at that time for the type of school for young children which immediately preceded the Kindergarten. It was called *Kleinkinderbeschäftigunganstalt*, a name well suited to characterize an establishment in which "occupations" played so large a part in keeping the children busy. The institution founded by Froebel carried over the idea of its predecessor, but much modified. The "occupations" were not to be directed by the teacher altogether, the teacher dictating each move, but were to be such as would set free the child's spontaneous activity in creating things out of materials placed before him. It was, therefore, a new educational movement which had for its motive growth through self-activity, hence development of initiative, freedom, and independence. Such a movement was, therefore, democratic in its social and political outcomes, and this explains why the seed which Froebel planted bore so little fruit until transplanted to foreign soil, especially the United States. It is impossible to imagine Froebel as a part of, or in sympathy with, the Germany of today. Can anyone picture him who said so tenderly, "Come, let us live with our children," marching through Belgium and being in any degree responsible for the fate that befell so many of her little ones? Why, therefore, should we continue to use a German name for an institution that is so violently in opposition to German militarism which now seeks to dominate the world?

It would be better to say "Froebel School" instead of "Kindergarten," for his name will always be associated with

the idea for which it stands, but this name is open to the objection that the kindergarten of today has added features and is an improvement over that of his time. It is true, however, that the institution which he founded and which has been much modified rests upon the play motive. The play spirit is native. By means of play the child grows. Growth is the aim of all school life, and since it is promoted in childhood through the play spirit why not say "Play School" instead of "Kindergarten"?

Other names have been suggested, but "Play School" is most in accord with the popular conception of the controlling motive in the Kindergarten, and since the value of play has become better appreciated and more dignified in these modern times, the name suggested will be neither misleading nor objectionable on other grounds.